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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000121

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2014

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SUBJECT: ECUADOR UNDECIDED ON OAS SYG, SUPPORTS
CONSULTATIONS

REF: SECSTATE 10956

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Arnold Chacon, Reasons 1.4 (b)

11. (C) In response to Reftel regarding U.S. support for Francisco Flores's OAS secretary general (OAS SYG) candidacy, Charge January 19 called on Roberto Betancourt, the Ecuadorian MFA's third-ranking official and ambassador-designate to the United States (FM Patricio Zuquilanda was unavailable and VFM Edwin Johnson is accompanying GoE President Lucio Gutierrez on a U.S trip). Charge noted the USG would soon announce publicly its backing for Flores, hoped Ecuador too would favor the Salvadoran ex-president, and pressed the GoE to lobby for an early OAS SYG vote.

12. (C) Betancourt claimed Mexico and Chile were pressuring the GoE to support their own candidates, Foreign Minister Luis Derbez and Interior Minister Jose Miguel Insulza, respectively. Chilean President Ricardo Lagos had contacted GoE counterpart Lucio Gutierrez, for example. Derbez himself recently called Zuquilanda seeking Ecuador's vote, as had Chilean FM Ignacio Walker. Betancourt even had heard of a fourth candidate entering the race, although he lacked specifics. The GoE had yet to reach a decision, he revealed, as the candidates, including Flores, were all excellent.

13. (C) Quito supported Washington's call for OAS SYG consultations, Betancourt noted. It was vital the hemisphere's nations reach consensus on a candidate, sooner rather than later -- Ecuador thus backed the USG position favoring a vote before the Ft. Lauderdale OAS General Assembly in June.
Chacon